

# GOVERNORS ISLAND

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## **Governors Island Rezoning - South Island**

**(#N210126ZRM, C210127ZMM)**

Presentation to the New York City Council  
Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises

April 5, 2021

If you are a member of the public who wishes to testify, please register on the City Council Website at [council.nyc.gov](https://council.nyc.gov). Please visit the City Council Website to watch livestreams of all City Council Meetings and find recordings of previously held meetings.



# Governors Island At A Glance

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**172 acres at the center of New York Harbor**

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**Minutes by ferry from Lower Manhattan  
and Brooklyn**

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**120 acres of open space including new 43-  
acre park**

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**1.3M SF of Historic Buildings, plus 33 acres  
designated for new development**

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**Open to the public between May-October  
with goal of being open year-round**

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**2003 Deed established set of required,  
permitted and restricted uses to guide  
future development**

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**The Trust's mission is to realize the full potential of Governors Island, demonstrating a bold vision for public space.**

**Our vision for continued growth focuses on three key strategies:**



**Open Space, Recreation  
& Amenities**



**Arts & Culture**



**Climate Solutions**



# History and Transformation



**Pre 1800**  
**The Lenape**



**1800-1966**  
**U.S. Army Base**



**1966-96**  
**U.S. Coast Guard Base**



**2001**  
**National Monument**



**2003**  
**Island Sold for \$1**



**2005**  
**First Visitors**



**2010**  
**City Control**



**2013**  
**Historic District Rezoned**



# Deed Requirements & Master Planning

Deed outlined required, permitted and prohibited uses, and required a Master Plan

Key principles and project goals guided Master Plan development in 2006:

- Create a public place and parklands that all New Yorkers will cherish;
- Enhance New York's place as a center for culture, business, education, and innovation;
- Achieve financial self-sustainability for the Island;
- Adaptively reuse historic structures and provide for the preservation of these public treasures;
- Promote environmentally sustainable development; and
- Contribute to the vitality of New York Harbor and link to the surrounding waterfronts.



## Master Plan Released in 2010 following years of public engagement





## Following a decade of progress, Governors Island is poised for growth as a greater resource for New York City



### Over \$400M of Investment

43 acres of award-winning, resilient park space, infrastructure improvements & expanded transportation



### Educational & Cultural Partners

Year-round tenants, including the Harbor School, the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council & dozens of cultural partners working across arts and the environment



### Audience Growth

An expanded six-month season with a rapidly growing audience — nearly 1M annual visitors in 2019, with 75% from the 5 boroughs

**In September, 2020, Mayor Bill de Blasio and the Trust announced a vision to bring a leading center for climate solutions to Governors Island.**

This new center will pair interdisciplinary research focused on developing, testing, and scaling new tools for climate solutions with meaningful public engagement through diverse educational and cultural experiences.



**The Trust envisions attracting an academic or research anchor institution, followed by new uses related to climate solutions, complemented by other cultural, non-profit and commercial tenancies.**



## Education or Research Anchor Institution



### Dormitories & Faculty Housing



### Convening & Hospitality



### Commercial Operations & Innovation



### Living Lab & Cultural Uses

## Project To Support City's Economic Recovery

### Job Creation & Economic Impact

Project would create 8K jobs and an estimated \$1 billion of fiscal impact for the City, all on Governors Island alone

### Economic Diversification

Project can power City's post-COVID diversification into green industries and position NYC as leader in climate & environmental fields

### Education & Equity

Project would create meaningful educational pathways into climate field with broad training opportunities for New Yorkers

### Inspiration

Project would create the space to re-imagine our urban fabric





## Project Supports City of New York's Broader Resiliency Strategy\*

### Mitigating Risks

Serve as a living lab for the City by testing and demonstrating resilient infrastructure systems and innovative solutions for the built environment

### Empowering Residents & Businesses

Serve as a platform for public engagement, education and advocacy, showcasing solutions and giving New Yorkers tools to take back to their communities

### Building a Climate-Ready Government

Serve as a central convening space for policy discussions and cross-silo collaboration

### Advancing & Applying Climate Science

Provide the space for research and development for strategies to support the City's efforts

*\*MOR's four strategy pillars*





# ILLUSTRATIVE VIEW SUMMARY



Overall Vision



Yankee Pier Plaza



Fort Jay Theater



Western Promenade



Southeastern Promenade



Hammock Grove



## Our Plan



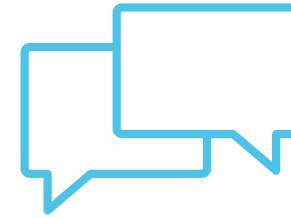
### Strategic Planning & Public Engagement

- Community engagement
- Outreach & marketing to universities, NGOs & philanthropic leaders



### South Island Rezoning

- Create zoning framework to align zoning with uses allowed by deed
- Allow for vibrant mix of uses that complement and enhance existing Island character
- Create limitations on height, density and add open space protections



### Anchor Institution Solicitation

- Target educational or non-profit research institution focused on climate change through RFP/RFEI
- Goals RE: public engagement, equitable edu & workforce pipelines & design guidelines
- Release in **2021**



### Historic District & Year-Round Access

- Trust will continue to attract uses and expand space for existing tenants in support of year-round public access
- Future tenancies including arts and culture, education, amenity, recreation, hospitality and food and beverage uses

# Why We're Proposing a Rezoning of the South Island

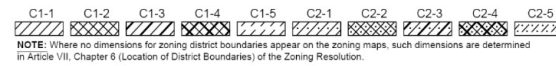
- Aligns zoning with long-envisioned, deed-permitted uses, and protects and expands park and open space
- Generates revenue to support the Island's mission (i.e., park maintenance, expanded ferries, historic district)
- Brings year-round activity to Island, expanding access for all New Yorkers
- Enables a critical project for the City: creation of first-of-its kind Center for Climate Solutions



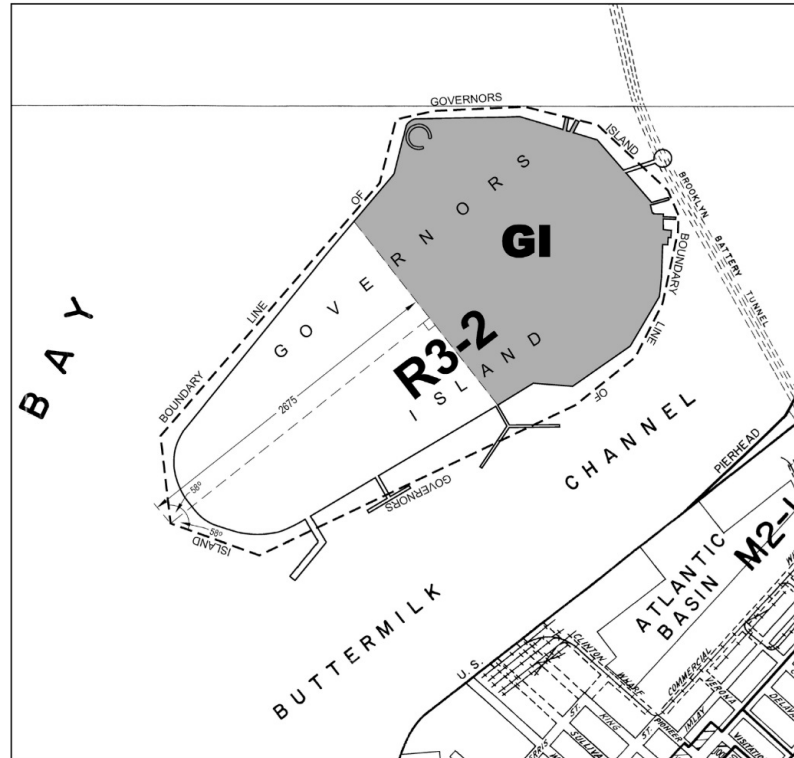
## Zoning Change Map

### Proposed Actions:

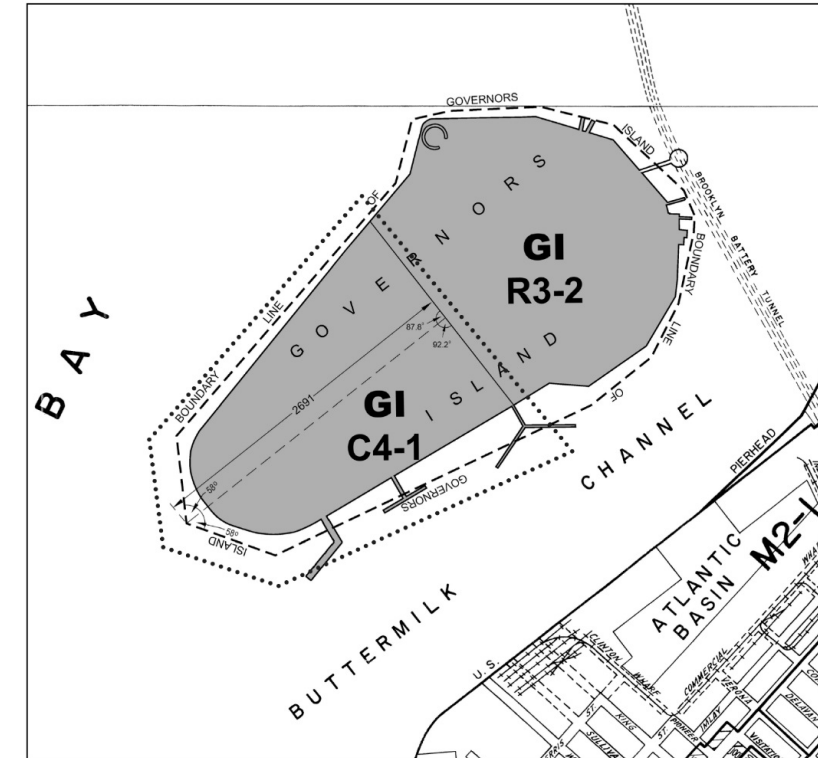
- Zoning Text Amendment to Modify the Special Governors Island District Regulations
- Zoning Map Amendment to (i) extend the Special Governors Island District; and (ii) rezone the South Island from R3-2 to C4-1



### Zoning Change Map



CURRENT ZONING MAP



PROPOSED ZONING MAP

# Development Overview

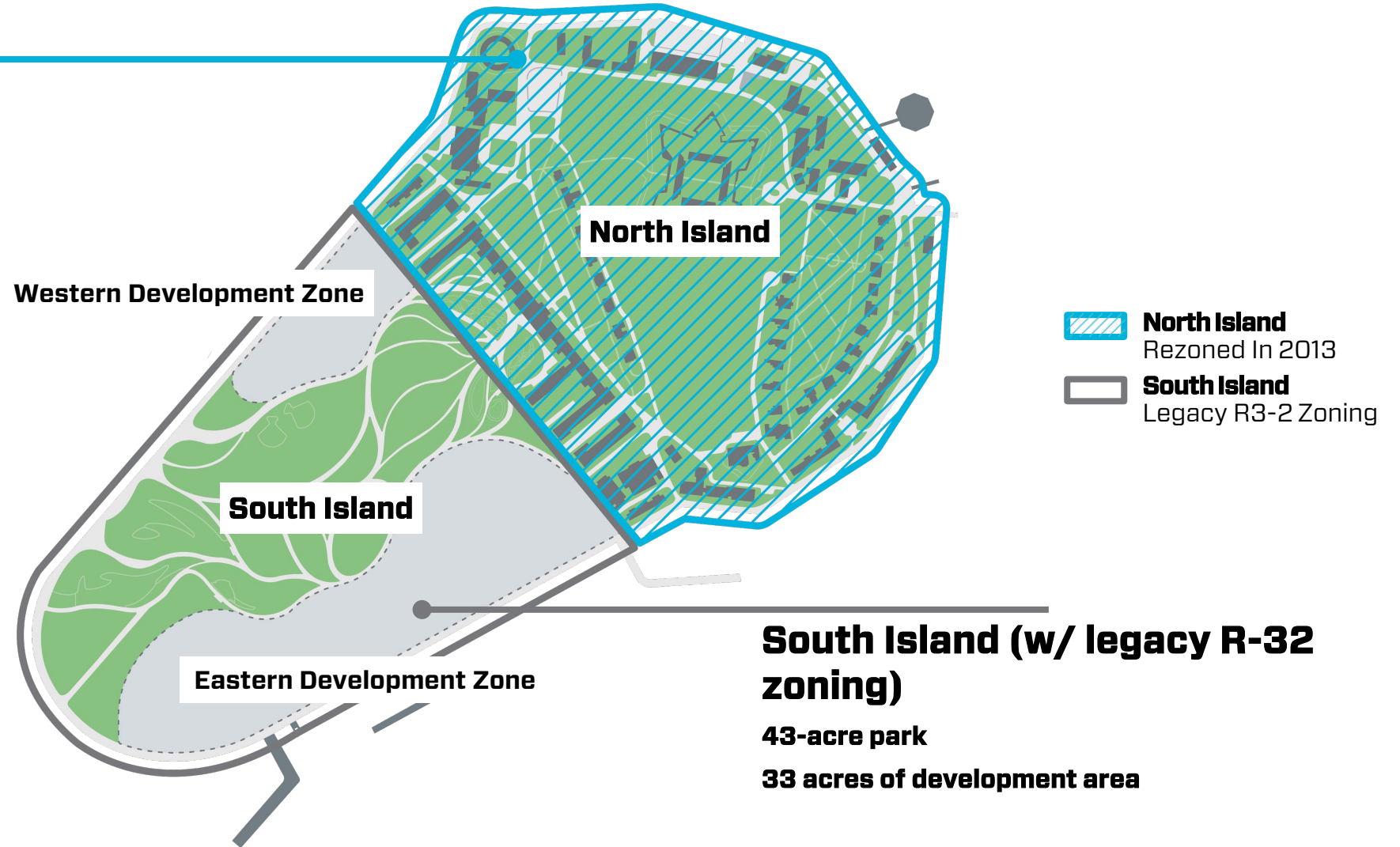
## North Island

1.3M SF of historic buildings

NYC Landmarked District

Current zoning allows for:

- Office
- Education
- Cultural
- Retail
- Restaurants
- Gyms & Health Clubs
- Hotel & Convening
- Amusements
- Maritime Recreation
- Dorm & Faculty Housing





## Existing conditions





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# South Island Rezoning Proposal

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## **Extend uses allowed in the Historic District (Northern Subdistrict, rezoned in 2013) to the South Island, including:**

- Office
- Education
- Cultural
- Retail
- Restaurants
- Gyms & Health Clubs
- Hotel & Convening
- Amusements
- Maritime Recreation
- Dorm & Faculty Housing

## **Add:**

- Research & Development
- Small Scale Production
- Accessory Uses to Island Operations

## **Protect and expand the existing open space**

**Allow a maximum 4.275M SF across designated development sites on the South Island, creating an effective 2.98 FAR based on the area of the development zones only\***

**Maximum heights of up to 200-250'**

\*Current R3-2 zoning allows up to 3.4M SF of development on South Island

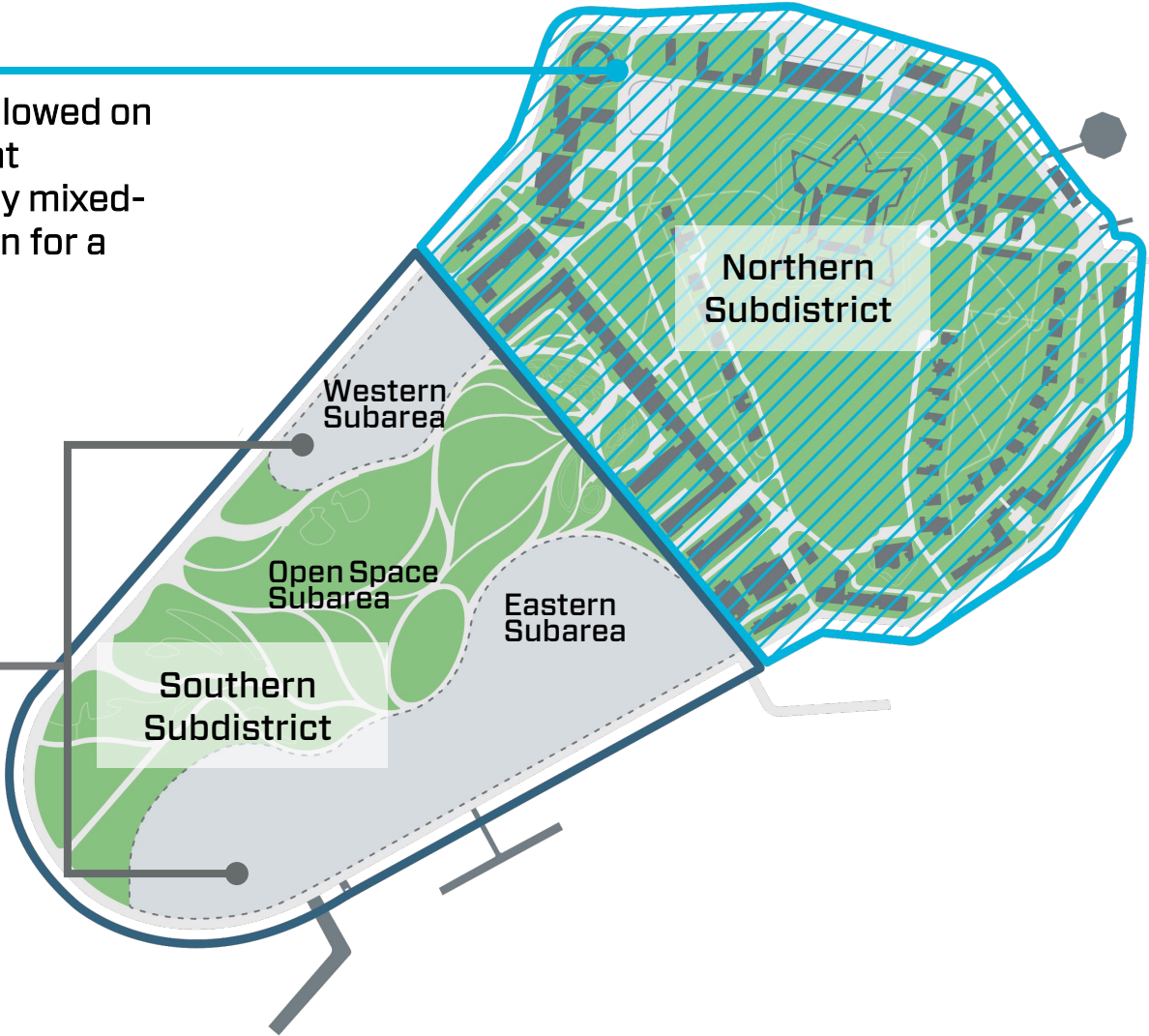


# New proposed Special District on South Island

Proposed rezoning will extend uses allowed on the North Island and add R&D and light manufacturing to create a mid-density mixed-use district that would support a vision for a center for climate solutions

FAR is generated only on Western and Eastern Subareas

Non-Park uses prohibited in Open Space subarea



-  **North Island Special District**  
Rezoned In 2013  
*No Changes Proposed*
-  **Proposed South Island Special District**

**Working with DCP, the Trust established guiding urban design principles, shared with our Community Advisory Council**

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Complement and enhance the park and public spaces and respond to environmental conditions.

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Connect to and establish a harmonious relationship with the park, esplanade, and Historic District.

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Retain and frame views within the Island, and towards New York Harbor, Lower Manhattan, and the Brooklyn waterfront.

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Promote innovative design approaches to achieve a high level of resiliency and environmental sustainability.

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Activate building edges along public spaces.

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Encourage flexibility to accommodate a wide range of building types and a mix of uses.



# Density and Scale



*Illustrative view from Hammock Grove*

- The Trust studied 8 comparable mixed-use projects across the US
- The total square footage of those 8 ranged from 2.25M SF to 8M SF, with an average of 3.7M SF
- Governors Island's South Island Development sites w/ proposed rezoning would allow for a maximum of 4.275 ZSF across 33 acres – 2.98 FAR

# Improve connectivity and ferry access

Establish a new network of primary and secondary pathways

Create new visual connections between the waterfront and the park

Further activate Yankee Pier as a primary ferry terminal





## Proposal will protect, support, and expand open space

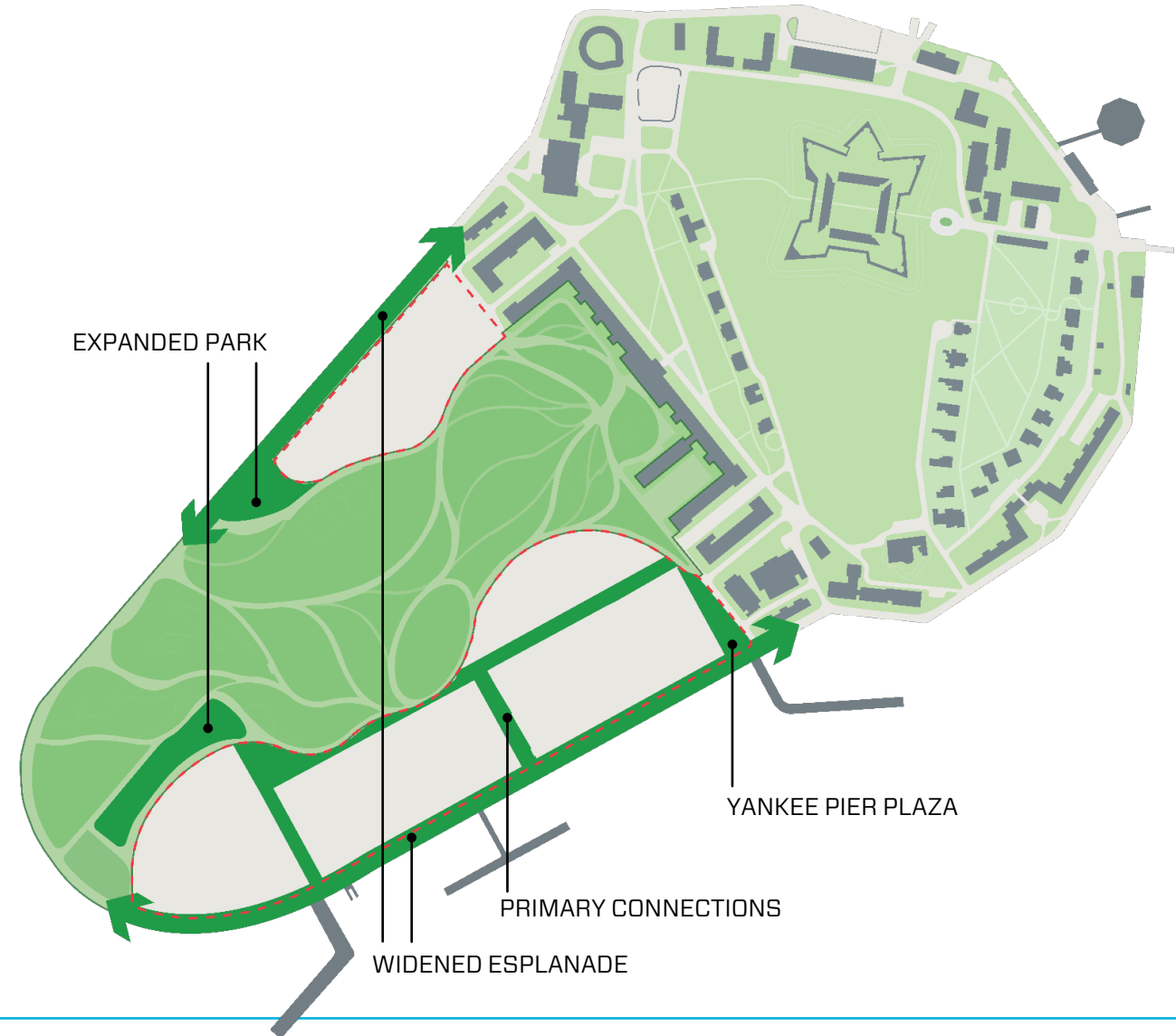
EXISTING PARK	43 ACRES
EXISTING ESPLANADE	3 ACRES
+EXPANDED PARK	3 ACRES
+WIDENED ESPLANADE	2.12 ACRES
+YANKEE PIER PLAZA	0.6 ACRES
+PRIMARY CONNECTIONS	4 ACRES

**55.72 ACRES**

**+ SECONDARY CONNECTIONS**

**+ EXPANDED PARK EDGE**

**NO PARK SPACE WILL BE LOST OR CLOSED**

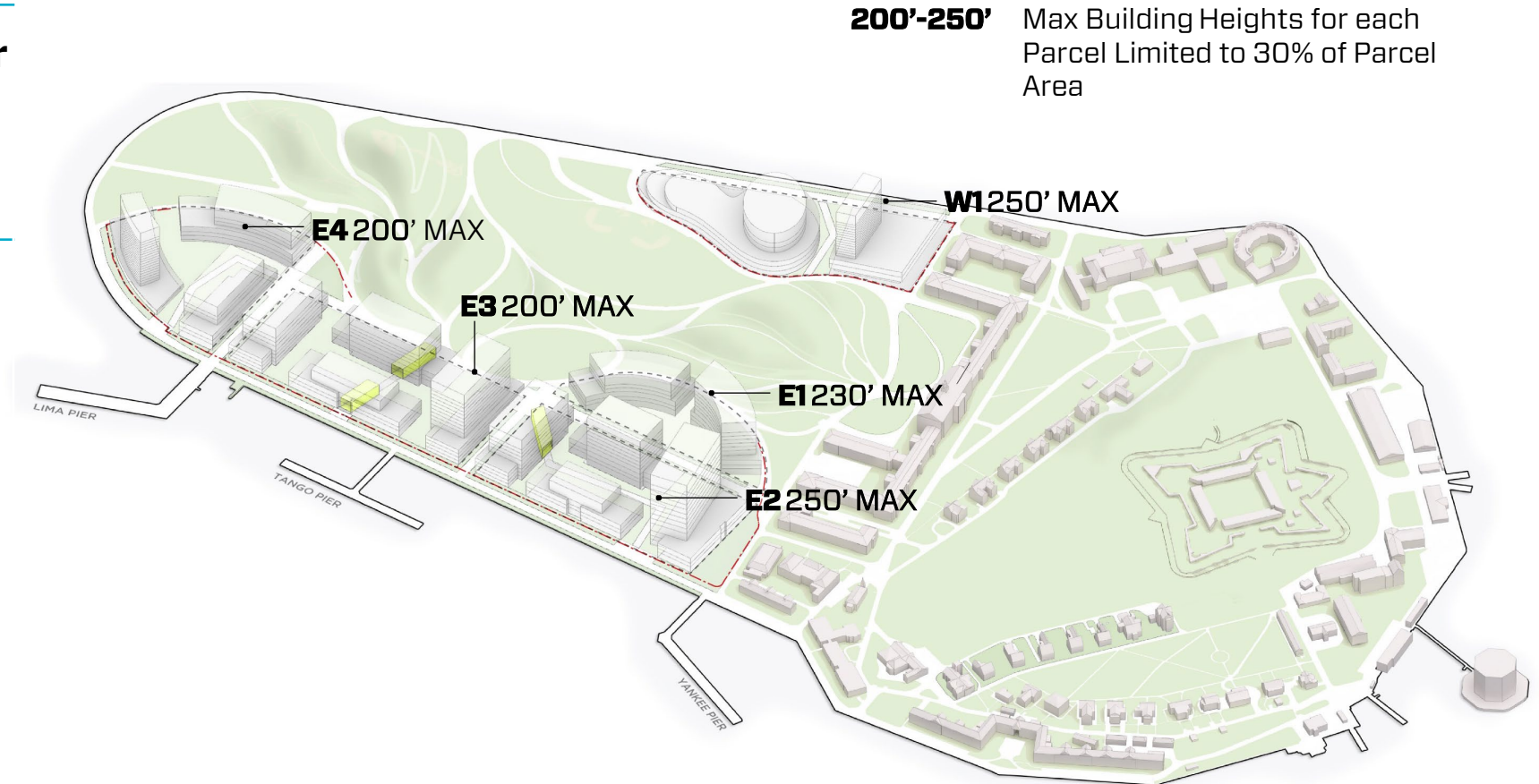


# Height and Bulk Regulations

**Proposed zoning rules allow for flexibility for a range of building typologies while controlling for height and bulk**

**Each parcel has tailored rules for bulk and to maintain light, air, and sightlines:**

- Height limits range from 50'-250'
- Maximum lot coverage: Steps down from 80% at ground level to just 30% for heights above 125'
- Setbacks and building orientation rules preserve skyline and waterfront views



*\*Above image is an illustrative example of one potential allowable massing and does not depict a design*



# Historic District Transition

Zone limiting height in the Development Zones

Consistent with the Governors Island Historic District Design and Development Guidelines developed by GSA, SHPO, National Trust & LPC

No portion of building within zone can be above 60', aligning with Liggett Hall cornice line



# Zoning Application Modifications

Heights	Historic District & Park Sensitivity	Open Space	Parking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Building heights in parcels E-2 and W-1 will be limited to 250', reducing the maximum building height allowed on the South Island from 300' to 250'</li><li>• Bulkhead heights and other permitted obstructions will be limited to 40' across both development zones</li><li>• Base plane issue resolved</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No portion of a building within 150' of the Historic District (the "Transition Zone") will be permitted to be built above 60'</li><li>• All building base heights will be reduced to 60' or less</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Esplanade on Eastern Edge widened to 70' from 55', resulting in additional acre of open space</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduction of allowable spaces from 300 to 200 (<i>*intent is for storage of operational vehicles</i>)</li></ul>



# Zoning Application Modifications

## Limitations on Open Space Amenity uses

Uses Limited to	Height Limits
<p><b>Use Group 13 (open to the sky)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Camps, overnight or outdoor day</li><li>• Circuses, carnivals or fairs of a temporary nature</li><li>• Commercial beaches or swimming pools</li><li>• Miniature golf courses and golf driving ranges</li><li>• Outdoor skating and roller-skating rinks</li><li>• Theaters</li></ul> <p><b>Use Group 6</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eating or drinking establishments with musical entertainment but not dancing, with a capacity of 200 persons or fewer</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open-air theaters restricted to 35'</li><li>• All other permitted park amenity uses restricted to 25' or under</li></ul>

## Governance and Oversight:

Design Guidelines	RFP Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trust to incorporate community feedback and develop design guidelines for all South Island development in partnership with DCP</li><li>• DCP and Trust drafted design principles and guidelines to be included in RFP</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trust to brief CPC on timing of RFP/RFEI release</li><li>• CPC to receive briefing on RFP selection</li><li>• RFP responses will be presented at public Manhattan CB1 meeting</li></ul>

## **The Trust has made commitments regarding non-zoning related comments**

- Maintaining existing tenants and partners
- Investment and expansion of athletic field spaces as funding becomes available
- Public waterfront access and activation, get-downs as funding becomes available
- Innovative environmental sustainability and resiliency measures



### **This project will support:**

- A vibrant Governors Island that is accessible to the public year-round
- A comprehensive, and mission-driven vision that complements and enhances the Island's existing character
- Creating a sustainable revenue stream to support Island operations needs and expanded public access
- Expanded opportunities for education and public engagement
- Aligning uses for the South Island development sites with what is allowed and envisioned by the deed
- Generating demand necessary to restore 1.3M SF in historic buildings
- The creation of 8,000+ permanent jobs

# GOVERNORS ISLAND

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## **Thank you!**

